



Fuelling Fitness for Your Sport - Softball

About Softball

Softball is a summer sport played from October through to March in most states, by boys and girls of all abilities and ages. Children can start playing from as young as 5 or 6, in modified games that introduce softball-specific skills through fun game based activities. A softball game generally lasts for 90 minutes (a regulation game lasts for seven innings). The game's format is similar to baseball, with one team fielding whilst the opposing team is batting. It's an anaerobic sport that involves strength, power, agility, speed and a range of skills.

Theoretically all members of the team are required to bat and field, whilst pitching is left only to the specialist pitchers. The fastest female softball pitcher in the world throws at around 118km/hour and the fastest male at around 150km/hour. Australia is the only softball nation in the world to have all their national teams ranked in the top three in the world.

Training Diet

It is crucial to recover well between each training session, to enable your muscles to recover and adapt to each training session. An ideal recovery meal should be eaten as soon as possible after each training session. For players trying to watch their weight or skinfolds it is best to bring the timing of their next meal forward so it can double as the recovery meal, rather than needing to add in extra meals.

The intensity of training sessions varies greatly. Therefore it is important for players to match their energy and carbohydrate intake to their training level each day.

Softball players should organise their meal times around their training sessions, so their usual meals or snacks can double as a recovery meal as soon as possible after each training session.

The most successful softball players are strong, powerful and very quick. High body fat levels can restrict speed and agility, hence impairing performance. To keep your body lean and powerful, limit low nutrient foods and drinks (e.g. soft drinks, lollies, cakes, chocolate, fried foods, takeaway foods, biscuits and alcohol). Instead choose meals and snacks based on high nutrient foods and drinks (e.g. less processed cereals, fruit, vegetables, low fat dairy products, lean meat, chicken, fish, soy products, nuts, seeds, legumes and water).

If you want to reduce your body fat, adding some extra aerobic training sessions into your training schedule can help (but make sure to firstly ask your coaches whether this will affect your training performance). Reducing your meal portion sizes and/or eliminating snacks from

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your diet can also help in managing your body weight. Another essential strategy for losing body fat is limiting low nutrient foods and replacing these with healthier, lower fat alternatives.

For more information on Controlling Body Fat and Making Weight visit [Body Fat Control and Making Weight](#)

Fluid Needs

Softball players need to be especially careful to prevent dehydration. They are at increased risk because they are competing outdoors in the heat of Summer and can have up to 2 to 3 games per day.

It is not possible to recommend a certain amount of fluid for all softball players. Each athlete's fluid requirements vary according to the individual's sweat rates, game duration, game intensity, temperature and humidity. For those who tend to get very dehydrated, experience muscle cramps or are salty sweaters it is especially recommended to choose fluids that contain electrolytes (such as sports drinks) in combination with water.

Visit [Sports Drinks](#), to view the SDA Fact Sheet for Sports Drinks

What Should I Eat Pre-Event?

- Choose a meal based on low glycaemic index carbohydrates and which also contains some protein.
- Ideally have your pre-event meal 2-4 hours before game time.
- Appropriate pre-event meals include breakfast cereal, pasta (with a low fat sauce), baked beans on toast, fruit salad and yoghurt, sandwiches or noodles.
- If you feel nervous or nauseous before an event, choose a liquid meal that's easy for your body to digest, such as a fruit smoothie or Sustagen drink.
- For more information visit [Eating and Drinking Before Sport](#)

What Should I Eat/Drink During Competition?

Stay hydrated by constantly sipping fluids (ideally water, sports water or light sports drinks) whilst in the dugout.

To see the SDA Fact Sheet for ideas for eating and drinking during sport visit [Eating and Drinking During and After Sport](#)



What About Recovery?

Alcohol impairs the recovery process and injury repair. If you must have alcohol after playing, ensure at least that you have firstly consumed enough other fluid (e.g. water, sports water or sports drink) to replace your fluid losses and have consumed an appropriate recovery meal. It is then still important to limit the amount of alcohol you consume.

Your recovery meal should consist of 1 gram of carbohydrate per kilogram of body weight, plus 10-20 grams of protein. Some examples include tuna with crackers; ham and salad sandwiches; or a protein drink and muesli bar.

If you have greater than an hour between games, have water and a carbohydrate snack (e.g. fruit, sandwich, yoghurt, milk drink, sports drink or fruit bar) as soon as possible after finishing the first game.

Visit SDA's Fact Sheet on Fighting Fatigue for more information [Fighting Fatigue](#)

How to Get Involved

To get involved contact Softball Australia (www.softball.org.au) for your local softball association

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